



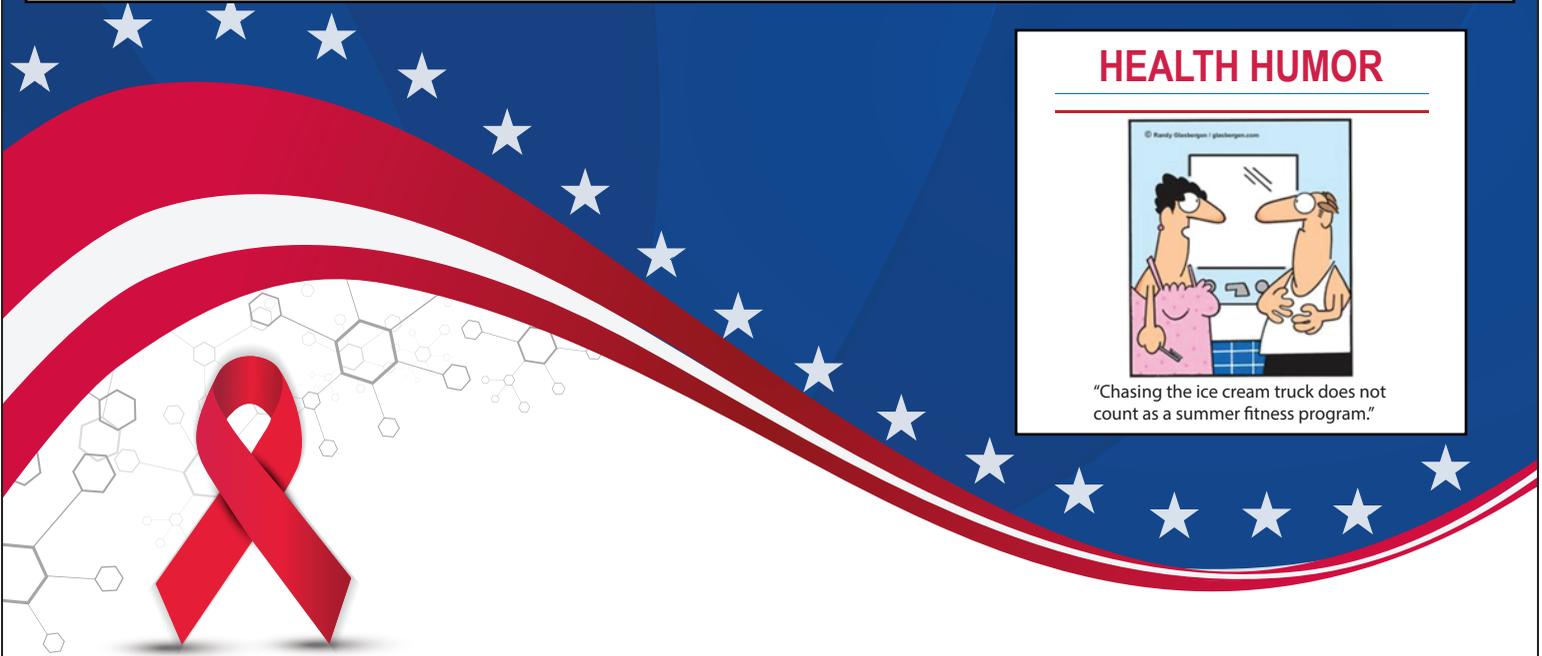
Freedom Home Health Care

# Newsletter

May 2019

## QUOTE OF THE MONTH

"Like a welcome summer rain, humor may suddenly cleanse and cool the earth, the air, and you." -Langston Hughes



## HEALTH HUMOR



"Chasing the ice cream truck does not count as a summer fitness program."

## May is ALS Awareness Month!

by: Maria Mendoza

### What is ALS?

ALS (amyotrophic lateral sclerosis) is a progressive neurodegenerative disease affecting nerve cells in the brain and spinal cord. When a muscle has no nourishment, it "atrophies" or wastes away. "Lateral" identifies the areas in a person's spinal cord where portions of the nerve cells that signal and control the muscles are located. As this area degenerates, it leads to scarring or hardening ("sclerosis").

Motor neurons reach from the brain to the spinal cord and from the spinal cord to the muscles throughout the body. The progressive degeneration of the motor neurons in ALS eventually leads to their demise. When the motor neurons die, the brain's ability to initiate and control muscle movement is lost. With voluntary muscle action progressively affected, people may lose the ability to speak, eat, move and breathe. The motor nerves that are affected when you have ALS are the motor neurons that provide voluntary movements and muscle control, like reaching for a phone or stepping off a curb.

There are two different types of ALS, sporadic and familial. Sporadic, the most common form in the U.S., accounts for 90-95% of all cases. Familial ALS (FALS) accounts for 5-10% of all cases in the U.S. FALS means the disease is inherited. In those families, there is a 50% chance each offspring will inherit the gene mutation and may develop the disease.

### Facts You Should Know:

- ALS is not contagious.
- Although the life expectancy of a person with ALS averages about 2-5 years from the time of diagnosis, many people can live with the disease for 5+ years.
- Once ALS starts, it almost always progresses, eventually taking away the ability to walk, dress, write, speak, swallow, and breathe and shortening the life span. How fast and in what order this occurs is very different from person to person. While the average survival time is 3 years, about twenty percent of people with ALS live five years, 10 percent will survive ten years and five percent will live 20 years or more.
- Progression is not always a straight line in an individual. It is not uncommon to have periods lasting weeks to months where there is very little or no loss of function. There are even very rare examples in which there is significant improvement and recovery of lost function.
- Approximately 5,000 people in the U.S. are diagnosed with ALS each year.
- Military veterans are twice as likely to develop ALS.
- ALS occurs throughout the world with no racial, ethnic or socioeconomic boundaries and can affect anyone.
- There can be significant medical care costs, equipment and home health caregiving later in the disease. It's important to be knowledgeable about your health plan coverage and other programs, including Social Security Disability, Medicare, Medicaid and Veteran Affairs benefits.



## ON THIS DAY IN HISTORY

May  
**5**

1865, Decoration Day was first observed in the U.S., with the tradition of decorating soldiers' graves from the Civil War and later American graves from World War I and World War II. In 1971, Memorial Day moved to the last Monday in May, creating a three-day holiday weekend.

May  
**17**

1875, The first Kentucky Derby horse race took place at Churchill Downs in Louisville.

May  
**21**

1881, The American Red Cross was founded by Clara Barton. The organization today provides volunteer disaster relief in the U.S. and abroad.

## CROSSWORD

### ACROSS

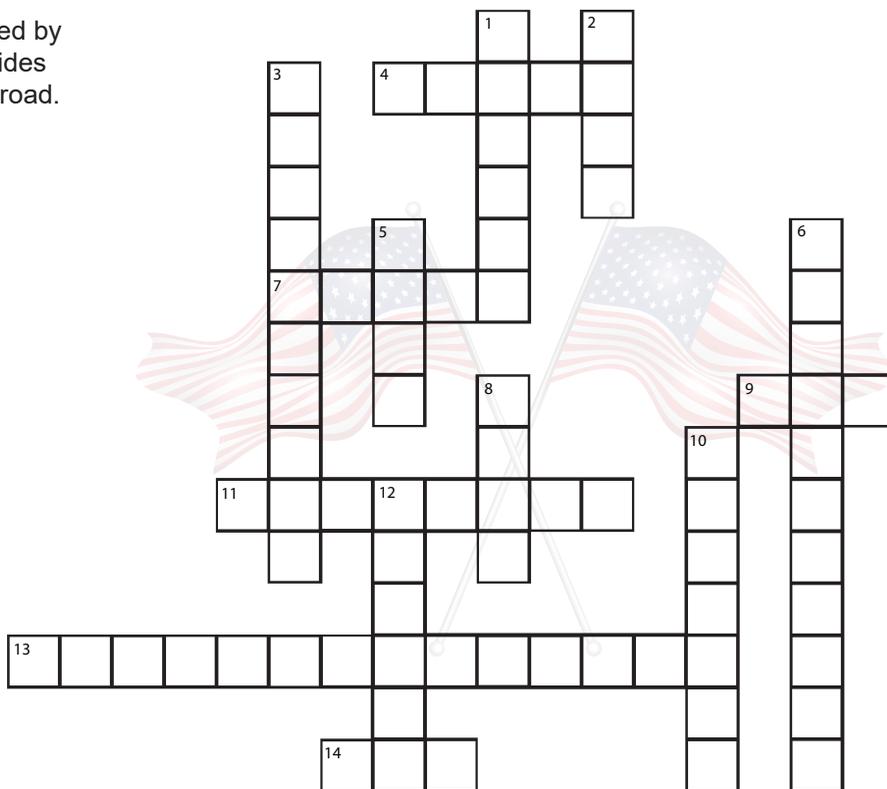
- 4. Freedom from war or hostility
- 7. Express emotions
- 9. Sun's name
- 11. Busy card company in May
- 13. The tomb of the \_\_\_\_\_
- 14. Morning moisture

### DOWN

- 1. Mother \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. Green part of the tree
- 3. A holiday for mothers
- 5. Rolled candy
- 6. The last Monday in May
- 8. Represents a country
- 10. Cleverness of wit
- 12. Tenant

## MONTHLY OBSERVANCES

- ALS Awareness Month
- Arthritis Awareness Month
- National Military Appreciation Month
- Older Americans Month



For more information:

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### APRIL CROSSWORD ANSWERS:

Across: 3. Seeder 6. Ethic 7. Nave 8. Blossom 11. Abulia 14. Audit Down: 1. Duped 2. April Fools Day 4. Easter 5. Peas 9. May 10. Spout 12. Basks 13. Avian

Stuck?  
Check next month's issue  
for the answers!